

# N.Z. COMMUNIST REVIEW

9



## A Question of Power

Wellington Branch, CPNZ Page 3

## The Unholy Triumvirate

(Contributed) Page 5

## Uphold and Strengthen Democratic Centralism

(Contributed) Page 11

SEPTEMBER, 1975 — 20c



# A Question of Power

(Abridged from a leaflet distributed by the Wellington Branch of the Communist Party of New Zealand)

**W**HEN Fletcher Bernard Smith announced they were closing down their branches in Auckland and Christchurch, the newspapers dumped the blame at the feet of the Boilermakers Union. It was the boilermakers, they told us, who made FBS shut up shop.

This was a clear attempt to make scapegoats of the boiler-makers. But it was also part of a bigger propaganda drive to convince workers that struggle on their part is self-defeating. "Your struggles will result in you losing your jobs." Such is the threat which the capitalists are hanging more than ever over the heads of the workers.

In this way they use their monopoly over the means of production, over the factories and the mills, to try and scare the workers away from struggle. While it exists, this monopoly means that workers can only labour, can only live, with the permission of the capitalist. By threatening to withdraw this permission the capitalist hopes to throw fear into all who might oppose him, into all who might challenge his control. His power to make such threats stems directly from his control over the means of production.

## THE STRUGGLE TO WIN CONTROL

Through trade unionism workers have struggled for many years to get some control over their lives. They have struggled to **put limits** on the domination of the capitalist class. But limiting this domination and **putting an end to it** are two different things.

There are many trade unions and other organisations in this country who work to put limits on the domination of the working class. Some do it better than others. But there is only one organisation whose main aim is to end this domination altogether — the Communist Party of New Zealand. This is not simply a "hope" or "desire" on the part of the Communist Party. For it is the rule of the capitalist class itself which **drives** the workers towards revolution; which forces them, if they are to liberate themselves, to replace the rule of the capitalists with the rule of the workers.

Marxist philosophy has shown that social life, the history of society, is not a collection of accidental happenings. Nor is it dependent on bright ideas or decisions by great men. Like the rest of nature, society develops according to regular laws and the study of the history of society is a science that enables a Marxist-Leninist Communist Party not only to interpret a situation but to change it.

This is done by examining the positive and negative aspects of any situation and actively assisting the positive aspect to develop. The modern working class working collectively in social production for social use is a positive aspect. The stealing of that production



by a minority capitalist class for private profit is the negative feature. These two contradictory, antagonistic aspects — social production for use and private ownership of the means of production for private profit — express themselves in the class struggle between the makers and the takers. The laws of development mean that this contradiction will grow sharper until it is resolved by the negative aspect being changed, in other words, by private ownership of the means of production being replaced by social ownership. Only then can social production be for social use and welfare.

The working out of this contradiction is inevitable. Marxism-Leninism makes the working class conscious of the process and this speeds it up. The creation of a Communist Party by the working class is part of this process of growing awareness and activity in organising the forces of revolutionary change.

But if the workers are truly to rule, rather than a minority of exploiters, then they must have the means to enforce this rule. This is why the Communist Party declares that under its leadership the instruments of political power shall rest in the hands of workers and nowhere else.

One of the most important facts of modern life is that the capitalist class holds the instruments of power firmly in its hands. Those instruments of power are the physical force of the police and armed services that enforce the capitalist "law and order" — primarily the "law and order" that workers must produce for private profit. This is what is meant by "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." This is why the working class must shed any illusions that it can become the ruling class through parliament or any other peaceful "abdication" by the ruthless capitalist class. It must organise to defeat the guns of the tyrant class.

### THE ENEMIES OF THIS STRUGGLE

The Communist Party is hated and despised by all those who fear the seizure of power by the working class and its allies. Many try to hide this fear behind pretty phrases. They say that "workers in New Zealand are not ready for what you propose," or that "the Communist Party goes too far." Such people cannot see that as it closes more and more factories and throws more and more people out of work the capitalist class is **confessing** that it can no longer organise production. It **admits** by its actions that in order to survive it must destroy what the labour of the masses has built up.

Meanwhile, in the socialist countries such as China and Albania, production not only forges ahead but, above all, serves to make the masses of these countries more and more masters in their own lands. And what has opened up such a brilliant future for the people of these countries?

The fact that the workers have seized and continue to hold political power in their hands. The fact that in these countries the dictatorships of the old ruling classes have been smashed

and replaced by the dictatorship of the working people.

This new dictatorship brings real democracy, rule by the people, for the first time ever. It does not apply within the ranks of the people for it is a dictatorship only over that small minority who wish to restore the old system of exploitation, the old dictatorship.

### THE MOST IMPORTANT THING

It is not "a better balance of payments" or "a lower rate of inflation" that can give a bright future to the great majority of people in New Zealand. Nor is it even redundancy agreements, higher wages or "price control". The only thing which can **guarantee** such a future is the seizure of power by the working class, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

For once it exists this dictatorship means that the masses are **free to take the initiative** in all areas of economic, social and political life, **without fear of repression**. It unleashes enormous energy for it gives full rein to the desire of the masses to **revolt** against everything which held them down in the old society, in order to build a new world and a new society.

Given its head in this way there are **no** problems the working class cannot solve, **no** forms of exploitation or oppression which it cannot end.

The living proof of this is to be found in the socialist countries today.

---

## The Unholy Triumvirate

(Contributed)

**A**T 2.40 p.m. on Friday the 18th of July, 1975, 43 Kawerau boilermakers were deregistered and thus became another scalp on the bourgeois State's industrial belt.

This was the eighth deregistration in New Zealand's industrial history — the sixth during a Labour Party Government's period of office. Each "deregistration" has the common factor arising from struggles where rank and file activity had breached the wall which divides the "acceptable" from the "unacceptable" class struggle in the eyes of the bourgeoisie, its State apparatus and its agents inside the workers' movement and also where these struggles were not controllable by the "fire brigade" skills of trade union chieftains nor by other "softer" line functioning by the state machine.

The power of the State to punish sections of the workers' movement who offend the bourgeoisie is well known to all workers in New Zealand and has been for generations but this realisation in no way gives rise to a spontaneous understanding of the true character of the State and its special relationship with the trade union

movement in New Zealand.

In the New Zealand workers' movement since well before Pember Reeves shepherded the old Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act through parliament in 1894, there has been confusion and naivety but above all, downright lying about the role, purpose and function of the State in so-called industrial relations. But this of course, is scarcely surprising or in any way accidental when social democracy, the offspring of imperialism, has so saturated the political and industrial atmosphere of the New Zealand working class movement for so long.

This confusion will never moderate spontaneously no matter how repressive the situation in New Zealand becomes and most certainly in these days, when such confusion is essential to the very survival of monopoly capitalism it will be cultivated to a greater degree than ever.

To come to grips with the essence of modern-day trade union State relations the primary step is to master understanding of the nature of the State. To approach the question from any other end is to land in the bog of social democracy, revisionism and squarely under the banner of the bourgeois line.

Lenin summed up the meaning of the State brilliantly and in a way that should be engraved on the minds of all those struggling to grasp the proletarian line of Marxism-Leninism when he said:—

"The State is the product and the manifestation of the **irreconcilability** of class antagonism. The State arises when, where and to the extent that class antagonism objectively cannot be reconciled. And conversely, the existence of the State proves that class antagonisms are irreconcilable." ("State and Revolution").

The key word in that passage and given emphasis by Lenin is "irreconcilability", surely striking enough when considering the familiar terms in industrial law of "conciliation proceedings" or the "industrial conciliation service" and so forth. The great division between the Marxist-Leninist and the revisionist view of the State commences, particularly at the point of practice on this precise issue.

The ideologists of the bourgeoisie, the spokesmen for social democracy and every variety of revisionist talk and act as if the State is an organ for the reconciliation of classes, whereas Lenin says:—

"According to Marx, the State could neither arise nor maintain itself if it were possible to reconcile classes." ("The State and Revolution").

The next major point of division and the state characteristic most obscured by the apologists of capitalism in New Zealand is also best shown by Lenin in the same work.

"According to Marx, the State is an organ of class rule, an organ for the **oppression** of one class by another; it is the creation



of "order" which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between the classes." (Lenin's emphasis).

### THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT

By creating this "order" the State deprives the oppressed class the "legality", the "right" or the channels to overthrow the oppressors. Whatever is done by the State whether "hard" or "soft", it never departs from "perpetuating this oppression" and every word, every clause in the 1973 Industrial Relations Act confirms the teaching of Marx and Lenin on the State.

This Act was created to replace the IC and A Act. The latter had acquired its content and form through the long period when, on a world scale, imperialism was the main characteristic of capitalism but when the merging within New Zealand of bank capital with industrial capital to create finance capital, had not reached the scope and scale we see today.

In the interests of monopoly capitalism, cumbersome industrial law had to be streamlined and updated and so the 1973 Act was formulated for this purpose.

The part played by the top layer of the trade union bureaucracy in assisting to formulate the structure of the Act is well known but only by grasping the full import of Marx's and Lenin's characterisation of the State can the significance of this be understood.

### ROLE OF REVISIONISM

Keeping this in mind, the special part played by the revisionist trade union bosses centred around the SUP can be seen with clarity. One of the primary tasks of the SUP elements is to be the Trojan Horse that takes the interests of the bourgeoisie in a "left" disguise and imposes them upon the working class. Prior to the final draughting of the 1973 Act the SUP group in Auckland organised through the Auckland Trades Council a mass meeting of union delegates from every possible job, union executive members and Trades Council delegates to hear and **accept with passivity** the President of the Federation of Labour's case for accepting the new Act.

With the long history of illusions about the State amongst New Zealand workers the task of the SUP elements was not difficult but the softening of the ground amongst the advanced and militant workers was the duty of revisionists of the McAra and Manson-Bailey cliques who had for years, often under the guise of attacking the old IC and A Act peddled a line of "unity" with the trade union bureaucracy under the signboard of "constructive criticism from the 'left.' "

To fail to combat the bourgeois line pushed by the McAra and the Manson-Bailey cliques is to do no more than prop up the daily treachery of the SUP and in fact "perpetuate the oppression"

by the capitalist class. This of course, is diametrically opposite to the aims of the revolutionary proletarian line of the CPNZ.

One of the selling points of the new Act was the deletion of special penalties with respect to strikes and lock-outs in certain so-called essential industries, although let it be noted that in these industries the law now demands that the workers shall within one month of striking, give their employers fourteen days' notice of their intention and where situations occur of so-called public emergency proportions, they can be dealt with by special emergency legislation. The shadow of 1951 still, naturally enough, looms over industrial law.

The fact about the "Industrial Relations Act" that has been slurred over by revisionism is that it ties the trade union structure more firmly to the State than the old IC and A Act ever did with all the latter's emphasis on penalties and the illegality of strikes.

The 1973 Act within its streamlined form gives the greatest attention to eliminating class conflict at the job level but in this, its first line of operation depends not upon the wording of the Act but upon the role played by the trade union bureaucracy at every level or to quote the Labour Department's own "Labour and Employment Gazette" of November 1973: "Legislation alone cannot bring about good industrial relations — co-operation of all parties concerned is needed."

The 1973 Act provides the legal, if velvet-lined shackles for the workers, the union bureaucracy an essential hand in clipping them on. Thus co-operation is formalised.

### **INDUSTRIAL MEDIATION SERVICE**

The Industrial Mediation Service is a vital area in the campaign to smother the flames of job struggle. A mediator, brought into the dispute at an early stage, particularly at the point where job action is contemplated, has the task, in the words of one bourgeois "expert", "to control conflict." The mediator soaks up the militancy around his desk instead of permitting it to show its power at the point of production and he deals with the union bureaucracy — the professional. Job representatives play a very second fiddle at best and may be mildly corrupted by the atmosphere. The mediator is a "dialogue specialist" the host to a talk and shake hands party. He has discretionary powers as to whether he will "arbitrate". (i.e. impose a decision) on the dispute but if the union bureaucrat agrees with the employers' representative no arbitration is required providing the bureaucrat can impose, cajole or bluff the workers into accepting the agreement. Failing an agreement the bureaucrat will endeavour to keep the workers in production whilst further talks are spun out. The bureaucrat thus fulfils his role in the spirit of the Act.

At the other and top-most end of the State - Employer - Union triumvirate that serves monopoly capitalism, is the Industrial



Relations Council consisting of 22 members — ten representing employers, ten the major trade union centre, the Minister of Labour and the Secretary of Labour, with other State Departments joining in from time to time. It advises Government on industrial legislation and to handle changes in the industrial environment, it makes recommendations on man-hour policies, codes of practice on industrial relations, improving them and so forth.

In practice, considering the nature of the State, the strength of monopoly capitalism at the employers' level, and the fact that the FOL representatives are far removed from daily or recent experience of life at the point of production and operate in isolation from the reality understood by workers (this is their Achilles' heel), the trojan horse function of revisionism under these conditions is more than just desirable for monopoly capitalism. Indeed it is absolutely essential. Therefore, Marxist-Leninists responding to Lenin's famous dictum, "to fight imperialism without fighting opportunism is a sham," must apply the proletarian line on this front, if the Industrial Council example of State-Union linkage is to be exposed as the class enemy it is.

Replacing the old Arbitration Court is the Industrial Commission but in case widespread job militancy causes disputes around clauses in proposed awards, there now exists the Industrial Court which can make final and binding rulings.

What should be understood as the important aspect is that issues that cause or could cause the eruption of class struggle are being pushed to higher levels of both State and union bureaucracy for solution. Under the 1973 Act the tidal current of legal-industrial activity pushes issues as far and as fast as possible away from the control of workers at job, rank and file or union branch meeting levels.

The Marxist-Leninist attitude towards the Act is obvious — it is to lead the workers to swim against this current.

Hand-in-hand with this general pattern and in truth absolutely essential to it, is the rapid decline of democracy in New Zealand trade unions.

The control or attempts at more effective control by the union bureaucracy over job delegates and job committees must be interpreted in the light of the aims of the 1973 Act and through this Act, the objectives of monopoly capitalism in the era of its general crisis. The whole range of the anti-democratic moves in the unions will also be seen in true perspective and its counter-revolutionary content made clearer.

The drive toward a Labour Front is by no means complete. The promise by the unsubtle Muldoon for the State to pay union advocates' wages is merely jumping the gun a bit as is his promise to finance unions.

The development of larger unions, the increase in the employ-

ment of university-trained sociologists, economists, lawyers, graduates of industrial relations faculties etc., as various kinds of union officials and full-time advisers, and much more, adds to the general picture. But as the full effects are felt by the workers — the decline of their influence in the union structure, the wage restraints and the rise in unemployment, rebellion against the unions as disciplinary bodies will grow and become very fierce. The State will have increasing difficulty in finding a peaceful way of papering over this contradiction.

Not only is there the legal right of the Minister of Labour to deregister any group of workers, who, like the Kawerau boiler-makers, act in the firm tradition of honest trade unionism, it is also now legally permissible to place the armed forces into a strike-bound job without a special emergency being declared; it still remains lawful for policemen if they so wish to harass and arrest job pickets and other activists under various excuses provided under the Police Offences Act (and much more). But in the prevailing crisis of capitalism, such deeds serve to teach the affected workers to react more militantly. Therefore, so long as it is possible, the "softer" methods are preferred by the bourgeoisie.

Now, as never before, the struggle for the proletarian line and the struggle against the bourgeois line, within the CPNZ is vital to the crystal clear understanding by genuine revolutionaries of class struggle on the industrial front.

Marxist-Leninists working in industry and inside the rapidly developing job struggle movement participate with fellow workers, in discussions around job tactics, expressing their own views clearly, never trying to dominate and expecting on occasions to be in a minority position but always being willing to set the example in class struggle action when it erupts on their jobs.

The CPNZ does not engage in the revisionist trade of offering unsolicited advice or secret intrigue that interferes with the workers' right to conduct union affairs in their own way for this is exactly the boss class position. Nor does the CPNZ "instruct" the now highly experienced militant rank and file worker how to suck the eggs of job tactics and inter-job unity. But the CPNZ does expose revisionist betrayal, it does engage in the introduction of the ideology of Marxism-Leninism to industry; it does expose the true nature of the state and the fraud of parliamentarianism to all workers and all this is an expression of the proletarian line in the concrete conditions of the New Zealand workers movement. By strengthening this work, using criticism and self-criticism to improve it and by paying attention to the development of closer links between workers and the Party, the path towards the removal of the moribund capitalist system, by the grave-diggers of capitalism — the workers — will be trodden more firmly no matter what repression by reactionary forces is carried out.

# **Uphold and Strengthen Democratic Centralism**

(Contributed)

**O**F ALL THE important principles of Marxism-Leninism, democratic centralism is one which is frequently distorted or deliberately misunderstood by bourgeois or petty bourgeois critics of the Communist Party. With regard to the party organisation they confuse centralism with authoritarianism, assuming that a similar regime prevails in a Marxist-Leninist party as in a bourgeois party. Opportunists in the party pay lip-service to the principles of democratic centralism but undermine it in practice.

The reason for this opposition is that democratic centralism is a basic principle of organisation of a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party. Without it there would be no such thing as a revolutionary organisation of the working class.

Early in the century, the great Lenin characterised opposition to the principle of centralised authority in the vanguard party of the working class as "aristocratic anarchism." He said: "**He (the Russian nihilist — Ed.), thinks of the party organisation as a monstrous 'factory'; he regards the subordination of the part to the whole and of the minority to the majority as 'serfdom' . . . division of labour under the direction of a centre evokes from him a tragicomical outcry against people being transformed into 'wheels' and 'cogs' . . .**" ("One Step Forward, Two Steps Back.").

## **A DIALECTICAL RELATIONSHIP**

It will doubtlessly be fairly well appreciated that a party organisation based on democratic centralism contains as the term implies, two essential features — democracy and centralism. The basis of centralism is democracy and the latter is guided by centralism, in practice, a centralised leadership. The part is subordinate to the whole, the individual to the collective and the organisation, the minority to the majority, the lower organs to the higher organs and the entire membership to the Central Committee.

On the other hand, the centralised authority in the party, exercises its leading role by making reports on policy and work and stimulating to the maximum extent, the highest possible democracy and initiative in the lower organs and the rank and file membership.

"Democratic centralism is a dialectical relationship; confusion or misunderstanding arises when either aspect is viewed in isolation from the other.

Because democracy and centralism are contradictory, it may be assumed that emphasis on one aspect must necessarily be to the



detriment of the other — the more democracy the less centralism and the more centralism, the less democracy. But this presumes that contradiction and struggle are predominant, that there is antagonism between the two aspects. However, under normal conditions, the two aspects are complementary and not mutually exclusive. Mao Tsetung pointed out ("On Contradiction"): "We Chinese often say, 'Things that oppose each other, also complement each other.' That is, things opposed to each other have identity."

**The party places stress on the essential unity and mutual interdependence of democracy and centralism, strives to achieve a high degree of both aspects in the interests of party unity and discipline.**

Of course, the party, in certain circumstances, may find it necessary, to take action to strengthen either democracy or centralism. For example, when Lenin was laying the foundations for a vanguard Marxist-Leninist party in Russia, centralism was the key aspect. Nevertheless, whatever measures may be undertaken to strengthen one aspect should result in improvement in the opposite aspect if they are viewed from the standpoint of a dialectical unity.

Under certain conditions, as when the party is controlled or influenced by opportunism or revisionism and consequently undergoes political degeneration, the contradiction between democracy and centralism is likely to sharpen and become antagonistic. This situation occurred when the Manson-Bailey elements held influence in the party. At that time democratic centralism was seriously undermined. Democratic centralism was converted into bureaucratic centralism and ultra-democracy.

To their friends and cronies they were liberals and ultra-democrats; to those they regarded as their inferiors or their critics they were despots and tyrants, demanding unquestioning obedience. Their attitude to the workers was one of patronising arrogance. When challenged by the Marxist-Leninists in the leadership, they openly defied democratic centralism and trampled on the party rules.

Likewise the McCara group, conscious of its isolation, launched a vitriolic campaign (which still continues) attempting with sham Marxism to sow doubt and confusion among the party members and undermine confidence in the party leadership. What McCara volubly once supported in words, democratic centralism, he now betrays in deeds! But what effect would the Manson-Bailey anti-party group's opportunism and factionalism and latterly, McCara's "big shot" individualism and "upside down" outlook have had on the party's democratic centralism if they had been permitted to continue their anti-party activities unchecked? Clearly, democratic centralism, and finally, the party itself, would have ceased to exist as revolutionary principles.

Again we see that the criterion of truth is social practice and

that the test of the revolutionary qualities of a revolutionary is more than verbal support for principles but actual deeds, his practice.

As far as McAra's "Big Shot" bourgeois individualism is concerned it is important to point out that this arises from contempt and defiance of the collective. As is well known, he refused to attend meetings on request to iron out differences and submit to criticism. His individualism is by no means synonymous with individual responsibility which is an essential part of collective methods of work. The question is one of accepting responsibility to the collective. Those comrades who lose contact with the collective, which is usually the party branch, are breaking their links with the party itself. They are in danger of ending up in the camp of reformism.

As there must be division of labour within the party, there must also be individual responsibility, that is, the assignment of responsibilities for particular tasks and sections of work. Sometimes there may develop inflated organisation — sub-committees for this and sub-committees for that — exceeding the demands of a given situation. Opportunists have seized on the opportunities presented by sub-organisation — sometimes necessary — to build up their anti-centralist opposition. Division of labour and responsibility is not inherently wrong; the manifold tasks of the party must be performed. But this has to be related to the tasks facing the party and under effective control and guidance of the centralised leadership.

### **DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM AND THE COLLECTIVE**

Naturally in any collective, there will be divergent or even opposing views, majority opinion and minority opinion. The collective is the means by which differing points of view can be clarified and unified, the negative distinguished from the positive, the correct from the incorrect and revolutionary theory and the party's policy put into practice. The collective creates the conditions for the full development of democracy in the party.

On the question of democracy Mao Tsetung made the following point:

**"Without democracy there cannot be correct concentration because it is impossible to establish centralism when people have divergent views and don't have unity in thinking. What is meant by concentration? First there must be concentration of correct ideas. Unity in thinking, policy, plan command and action is attained on the basis of concentrating correct ideas. This is unity through concentration."**

Regarding centralism, Mao Tsetung made the following comment in dealing with the question of the assertion of independence:

Some comrades "do not understand democratic centralism; they do not realise that the Communist Party not only needs democracy, but needs centralism even more." ("Rectify the Party's Style of Work").



It is therefore clear that the aspect of centralism is of primary importance. There cannot be effective democracy without effective centralism, that without a strong centre the branches cannot also be strong. Mc Ara's line was essentially anti-centralist, as, in practice, he downgraded the role of the Party centre and asserted a stand of independence and many centres.

As it is well known, the principle of the minority adhering to majority decisions and election by majority vote is recognised as democratic procedure in the trade unions and social democratic and bourgeois parties. However, in practice, various factors ensure that the majority if it expresses a progressive line in opposition to the ruling junta, is suppressed. Indeed, in the case of social democratic parties, movements which are likely to create a threat by building a majority viewpoint will be frustrated or diverted into innocuous channels.

In a revolutionary organisation, there is always the possibility of a minority viewpoint, if it is a correct one, influencing the majority and winning general acceptance. In the history of Chinese Communist Party, Mao Tsetung was in a minority until 1935 when he finally succeeded in gaining support for his correct revolutionary line. And of course, Marx, Engels and Lenin in their day, were once in a minority position.

While maintaining the principle that majority decisions are binding on all including the minorities, the right of the latter to continue to hold their opinion after making known their disagreement, must be preserved. In actual practice, it is often the case that the minority view may not be 100 per cent erroneous and has some merit, particularly if the question is one of application or tactics.

In the CPNZ during the struggles against the Manson-Bailey anti-party clique, the revolutionary elements were at a certain stage, in a minority on the Political Committee. The revolutionary line gained mass support because it was correct; the opportunist line was defeated because it was incorrect.

When minority viewpoints mature as definite anti-party, anti-Marxist-Leninist groups or factions, representing an opportunist, bourgeois line within the party, they are nevertheless instructive to the party as negative examples, they steel and unify the party ranks in the process of the necessary struggle against them.

However, normally under a correct revolutionary leadership, differences are of a minor or secondary nature, can be ironed out and may not even require the formality of a vote to determine the consensus of opinion. The party's unity and monolithic character is based on consciousness and conviction of its members. The party uses the methods of persuasion, logical argument, criticism and self-criticism to achieve unanimity and the "concentration of correct ideas." As Stalin has pointed out, "the achievement and maintenance of the dictatorship of the proletariat is impossible without



a party which is strong by reason of its solidarity and iron discipline. But iron discipline in the party is inconceivable without unity of will, without complete and absolute unity of action on the part of all members of the party . . . iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes criticism and contest of opinion within the party. Least of all does it mean that discipline must be 'blind.' On the contrary, iron discipline does not preclude but presupposes conscious and voluntary submission, for only conscious discipline can be truly iron discipline . . . ”

It will, therefore, be seen that the Party cannot be built on the basis of slavish obedience to commands ("commandism"). Indeed should such methods prevail, it would reflect weakness and opportunism not ideological strength.

Commandist methods can develop when general calls or directives, basically correct, have not received the necessary attention and study by lower committees. This reflects weaknesses in leadership which has neglected the all-important question of the actual situation and application in practice.

In one party branch, the question of the need to build the "People's Voice" and increase sales, was raised. Some members undertook to sell the paper in the pubs. No one directed or "commanded" these comrades to take on this task. They volunteered to do this job.

In a revolutionary party, once the ideological-political policy has been correctly communicated to all party levels, the specific task corresponding to the given policy and situation will be carried out without the need for coercion.

Mao Tsetung pointed out: "A great revolution requires a great party and many first-rate cadres to guide it . . . To attain this aim inner-party democracy is essential. If we are to make the party strong, we must practise democratic-centralism to stimulate the initiative of the whole membership . . ."

Only by strengthening democratic centralism and the spirit of collective work including criticism and self-criticism, can we arouse to the highest degree the initiative and enthusiasm for action on the part of the whole membership.

### **CRITICISM AND SELF-CRITICISM**

Characteristic of the ex-party opportunists was their failure to conduct thorough-going criticism and self-criticism. Their criticism often degenerated into personal abuse and such self-criticism as they were sometimes induced to make, lacked serious analysis or glossed over personal responsibility.

When the object is to eliminate faults and shortcomings in the interests of struggle and the working class, Communists and revolutionaries should never fear criticism and self-criticism either in the party or emanating from the masses.

There's no such person as a party cadre without blemish who

can do no wrong or commit no errors. An honest and sincere attitude to criticism and self-criticism without unnecessary breast-beating or bombast is the sign of a true Communist or revolutionary.

Democratic-centralism is closely related to the mass line. As Mao Tsetung points out, "In all the practical work of our party, all correct leadership is necessarily 'from the masses, to the masses.' " Mass line links will be weakened if at some level there is any interruption in the flow of ideas. This can happen either upwards or downwards — upwards when reports are not made or do not get through to the centre; downwards when policy statements are not acted on by lower levels or not developed by them in a concrete manner.

Weaknesses in the mass line are bound to affect democratic-centralism and vice versa. In our Party democratic-centralism is not as good as it could be because of shortcomings in the mass line within the party. This is due to the fact that the organisational level does not correspond to the level of politics. Organisational problems covering a broad field — cadres, education, work in mass organisations, etc., insofar as they remain unsolved or partially unsolved, restrict mass-line connections and consequently also, democratic-centralism.

## DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM AND IDEOLOGY

As has been pointed out, the revisionists and opportunists, have forcibly demonstrated by their practice that they oppose and reject democratic-centralism as the basic organisational principle of Marxist-Leninist parties. Their anti-Party activities are manifested primarily in two forms, anti-centralism and factionalism. The anti-centralism, in reality proved to be anti-democratic centralism and the factionalism was directed towards establishing alternative and opposition centres in the party against the existing Marxist-Leninist leadership. This is a common historical experience of Marxist-Leninist parties. Liu Shao-chi consistently undermined democratic-centralism in the Chinese Communist Party. So did Trotsky and company in the Russian Bolshevik Party.

Thus the question of firmly upholding and strengthening democratic centralism or not involves the struggle between two lines — the line of revolution based on Marxism-Leninism or the bourgeois line of liberalism and class collaboration and support of imperialism.

Adhere to the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist line and strive for the fullest application of the principle of democratic-centralism!

Unite the Party around its Marxist-Leninist leadership and policy through active ideological struggle on the basis of the principle and practice of democratic-centralism using the methods of collective style of work and criticism and self-criticism!

Published 3/9/75.

Registered at the G.P.O., Wellington, as a Magazine.

Published by the In Print Publishing Co. Ltd., 139 Albert St., Auckland;  
and printed by Wilson Printery Ltd., 139 Albert St., Auckland.